



One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

January 18, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

I read with incredulity your statement today asserting you are “thoroughly disappointed” at the attention being given to President Trump’s racist, xenophobic statements at last week’s White House meeting. The President’s defamatory words are in keeping with similar statements he made previously regarding immigrant communities and expose yet again his anti-immigrant bias, which is the real impediment to reaching agreement on legislation to protect the DREAMers.

When you were confirmed as Secretary, I was concerned that since your past jobs were as staff to John Kelly, both in the Department of Homeland Security and at the White House, you would not have an independent voice on issues of critical importance to the Department and the country. Regrettably, it seems that I was right. Your decision not to acknowledge and repudiate the President’s offensive words describing certain African and Latin American countries calls into question your ability to lead the men and women of the Department.

As Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I know very well the urgent immigration and border security matters we must address as a Nation. I also know that spending billions in U.S. taxpayer money on a boondoggle border wall and using hateful speech about immigrant communities is not the way to do so.

Going forward, I remain committed to working with all those trying to improve our Nation’s immigration system and better secure our borders while upholding our American values. I urge you to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson".

BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Ranking Member